

Interview Index

Interview Date: 10/19/2017

Interviewee: Sister Suzanne Ensminger

Interviewer: Shannon Green, Director, CSJ Institute, Mount Saint Mary's University; Sean Gary, Kelby Thwaits, Instructor, Film and Television, Mount Saint Mary's University.

Location: Villa Carondelet [Carondelet House convent], 627 S Carondelet St, Los Angeles, CA 90057.

Transcription Date: 11/22/2017

Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:18.01] Date, location participants.

[00:00:36.26] Full name and age: Sister Suzanne Ensminger, age 83.

[00:00:50.27] Early life and family. Born Prescott, Arizona. 1901 Grandfather's sanatorium for tuberculosis in Arizona. 1878 Sisters of St. Joseph (CSJs) opened hospital in Prescott, sent to sanatorium for cure. Attended St. Joseph's Academy in Prescott.

[00:02:27.07] Parents. Father pharmacist from Indiana. Came for tuberculosis cure during WWI. Mother from Nova Scotia, moved to Kingman, Arizona 1898, then Prescott. Mother attended Immaculate Heart high school in Los Angeles, California. Siblings (4). Birth sister attended MSMU.

[00:05:11.14] Early religious life. Parent's reaction to vocation. Early vocation after high school. Attending reception for other girls. Sister Mary Gerald Leahy [(1917-2004)]. Entered after 1 year at Mount.

[00:07:00.00] Early memories of Sisters. Sister Generosa [Mother Mary Generosa Wall, founding Sister of MSMC]. Sister Ursula Flynn [opened St. Joseph High School in Lakewood]. Mother Rosemary [Lyons (1893-1971), President MSMC 1955-1958]. Story about birth sister willing Suzanne to MSMC.

[00:08:16.28] Attraction to CSJ community in Arizona. Challenges in Prescott.

[00:09:30.28] Attending MSMC. Studying Zoology with Sister Gertrude Joseph [Cook (-1962)]. Changed major to Home Economics. Entering religious life as sophomore.

[00:10:42.29] Sister Mary Gerald [Leahy (1917-2004)], counselor. Living with her at Carondelet Center. Sister Laurentia [Sister Mary Laurentia Digges, (1910-1991)]. Friend of family.

[00:12:15.20] Other Sisters on faculty. Sister Alice Marie [Cheap (1906-1984)]. Sister Berenice [Sister Mary Berenice Coyne], housekeeping. Sister Margaret Clare [Borchard (1911-2001)].

[00:12:59.26] Reception and postulancy. Sister Laurentia, Sister Mary Gerald dressing her. White dress. Cutting hair. Wearing the habit. First mission in Tucson, AZ--heat. Petitioning to wear white habit. Changing the habit.

[00:14:54.03] Receiving religious name: Sister Phillip Ann. Returning to baptismal name after changing habit.

[00:15:36.16] Early community life. Entering with group of 51. Waking early. Strict rules. Collation with peanut butter and bread. Sports. Charges [chores]--washing dishes for 100+ people.

[00:17:41.05] Living in Arizona vs. Los Angeles. Comparison of communities. Wearing pants in LA.

[00:18:59.07] CSJ ministries in Prescott, AZ. St. Joseph Academy. First Sisters 1878 to open 6-bed hospital for miners. Academy closed 1960s.

[00:20:22.21] Early ministries. Desire to teach. Reason for entering CSJs. Father's poem "I am the daddy of a nun". First mission in Tucson--60 first graders. Strict discipline. No kindergarten.

[00:23:09.13] St. Joseph School, Tucson. Building of convent at St. Joseph Academy. Fellow Sisters: Sister St. Charles Benton [(-2003)]; Sister Joyce Marie Gaspardo; Sister Mary George [Long?? (1918-2001)]; Sister Louise [?]. Living in community for 7 years. "Lenient" superior. Approximately 60 Sisters in AZ at that time--2 hospitals, 2 elementary schools, Salpointe high school, St. Joseph Academy.

[00:25:29.15] Trek of the Seven Sisters--reenactments as novitiates. Picacho Peak where Sisters met people from Tucson. History of Trek--Sisters coming from St. Louis to the West. Sister Monica's diary of Trek--ranchers proposing marriage to Sisters. Sister Mary Murphy. Decision of Sisters to go West--obedience. Need in Arizona at that time--education.

[00:29:39.02] [Director's comments].

[00:31:14.19] Sister Hyacinth (from Trek) or Ambrosia from Canada--had been married and had three children. Husband and children died of diphtheria. Entered community in St. Louis, Missouri.

[00:31:55.15] [Director's comments].

[00:32:24.10] More on Trek of Seven Sisters to Arizona. Indian schools--San Xavier del Bac Mission, Tucson; Banning. Sister Maria Louisa [?] working in Indian mission. Injustices against Native Americans. "Ends of the earth". Comparison to Suzanne's family moving to Kingman, Arizona and hauling water. Sisters working in Indian missions--mothers and teachers.

[00:34:31.10] Vatican II (1960s). Moving to San Diego. Fear of change in older Sisters. Changing habit. Changes to horarium. Changes to prayer. Rule of silence. Changes in liturgy in larger Church. More meaningful. Language from Latin to English; priest facing congregation; music and singing.

[00:38:29.12] Reclaiming the roots--history and charism. Sisters researching in Rome. Visiting Le Puy and Lyon, France. Power of young people in community. Visiting St. Louis, Missouri 350th Anniversary of community. Mother St. John Fontbonne [Jeanne Fontbonne (1759-1843), second foundress of CSJs]--letter to St. Louis community.

[00:42:05.00] Dislike of teaching. Teaching and working as Principal for thirty years. Individual contact. Working as Principal at St. Cyril's. Moving back and forth between Arizona and California. Eight years in Washington state; 1 year in Hawaii. Love of San Diego, California.

[00:43:55.10] Parish ministry. Faith development and life. Attending University of San Francisco for masters in Applied Spirituality and theology. Professor in class "Mystery of God" and study of Cosmology--shaping image of God.

[00:46:05.27] Shaping one's image of God. Traditional image of God as "God of fear". Image of God affecting relationship with God. God as a "loving God".

[00:48:37.04] New cosmology. Study of universe with God bigger than Earth and planets.

[00:50:12.07] Love of parish life. Importance for women ministers. RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults]--assisting conversion to Catholicism. Role of parish in community--deepening spirituality. Social justice.

[00:52:58.08] Social justice issues. Working with refugees.

[00:54:03.29] Charism. Responding to needs. Reconciliation. Former "humility and charity" now "unity and reconciliation". The "dear neighbor". Working with non-Catholics--"praying to the same God".

[00:55:53.25] Retirement since 2012. Working with Ignatian Volunteer Corps [IVC]. Comparison to Jesuit

Volunteer Corps. Community reflection component--"sharing where we have met God".

[00:57:59.25] Finding God at this time in world. "Finding God in all things". Experiencing people from around the world.

[00:59:58.16] Women's leadership. Women as deaconesses and priests. Women's leadership in parishes. Qualities for leadership: intelligence, sensitivity to others, organization skills, warmth and listening.

[01:02:26.05] Future of religious life and CSJ charism.

[01:03:38.25] [Director's comments].

[01:03:50.26] Annual CSJ Assembly. Sisters only this year, not associates. Governance.

[01:05:28.13] Other reflections. Salpointe. San Xavier del Bac Mission, Tucson. Salpointe High School. Palo Verde High School. Booth-Fickett Math Science Magnet school. Wearing habit in heat.

[01:08:12.00] [Director's comments].

[01:08:47.10] End of interview.

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Transcription Date: 11/29/2017

Transcribed By: Nancy Steinmann

[00:00:00.00] [Director's comments]

[00:00:18.12] So this is the Mount Saint Mary's University Oral History Project, filming at Villa Carondelet, on October 19, 2017, Shannon Green interviewing Sister Suzanne Ensminger--is that the right way to say your name--Ensminger--

[00:00:31.27] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: That's right.

[00:00:33.26] SHANNON GREEN: All right. Okay. So if you could get us started by stating your full name and your age?

[00:00:42.24] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh. My name is Sister Suzanne Ensminger, and my age is eighty-three.

[00:00:51.04] SHANNON GREEN: Sister Suzanne, would you get us started by just telling us a little bit about your childhood, your family, and where you grew up?

[00:00:59.14] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I grew up in Prescott, Arizona, and I was born and raised there. I met the Sisters of St. Joseph very early in life, because my family had been very well acquainted with them. My grandfather was a doctor--he was an M.D.--and he himself had tuberculosis. And he came to Arizona to be cured, and then he had his own sanitarium. And in the early days of our history in Prescott, the Sisters came in 1878 to open a hospital there. And then what happened was, my grandfather came to Prescott in 1901 and many of the Sisters from St. Louis contracted tuberculosis and were sent to Prescott to be cured. So that is the long history that my family has with the Sisters of St. Joseph. Then I attended St. Joseph's Academy, which was [grade] one through twelve, and my sister, who was twelve years older than I also attended St. Joseph's Academy in Prescott.

[00:02:27.03] SHANNON GREEN: Could you tell us a little bit about your parents and what they did? Your parents?

[00:02:33.27] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: And--

[00:02:34.17] SHANNON GREEN: --and what they did, what your parents did for a living, or--

[00:02:37.16] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh, yes. My father was a pharmacist, and he was not from Arizona--he was from Indiana. And he came during the First World War, because he had tuberculosis and he came to Prescott to be cured. He was cured, met my mother, and never returned to Indiana. He was a pharmacist. My mother came with her parents in--from Nova Scotia--in 1898. And they first settled in Kingman, Arizona, and then moved to Prescott. So she grew up in Prescott. She herself did not go to the Sisters of St. Joseph. She came to California and went to Immaculate Heart High School, which is right here in Los Angeles. We were four children. I was the youngest. My oldest brother was fourteen years older than I. He went to Loyola College, and then was in the Second World War. My sister was twelve years older than I. She attended the Mount. She began there in 1940 and then in 1941 when war was declared my father called her and said, "I want you to get on the next train and come home", because the Japanese are going to bomb California. And she cried and said, "No Daddy, I don't want to leave!" And he said, "Yes." And she did--she left the Mount. And it was always a source of sadness for her that she wasn't able to finish. My brother Phillip was eight and a half years older than I, and he was single, and he was in the Jesuit seminary

for a while--only one year though, and then he was in interior decorating with Bullocks and I. Magnin. But he was killed in a plane crash in 1977--largest plane crash in history.

[00:05:12.01] SHANNON GREEN: Was your family very Catholic? Did you participate a lot in parish life, or--?

[00:05:19.23] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, my father wasn't a Catholic, but he always saw that we had a Catholic education. My mother was very, very Catholic. I always said she would have made a better nun than I did. [laughs].

[00:05:35.08] SHANNON GREEN: How did your parents feel about you becoming a Sister?

[00:05:39.17] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: My father tried to talk me out of it. He said, "I'll send you to Europe--you can do anything you want", and so on. But my mother was very, very happy. [smiles].

[00:05:55.20] SHANNON GREEN: When did you know you wanted to be a Sister?

[00:05:57.29] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, I guess it was always there, because I was very, very close to the Sisters growing up. I used to--my mother used to say, "If you'd spend more time at home doing some of this housework than you do with those Sisters, things would be better!" But I knew she--really approved of it. And I--when I graduated from high school I kind of had the idea. But then when I went to the Mount it really solidified it for me, because I went to the reception and profession, which at that time was at the old Saint Mary's Academy on Slausen, and that was it. I knew I wanted to be a Sister. And I came back up to the Mount and went knocking on the convent door looking for Sister Mary Gerald Leahy [(1917-2004)], who was the Sister who helped me enter, and that was it. I entered after the one year.

[00:07:00.16] SHANNON GREEN: What do you remember about the Sisters when you were younger--when you first met them? Any names of Sisters you remember, and what was attractive about them for you?

[00:07:12.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: We had some wonderful friends with the Sisters. My mother was very close to Sister Generosa--Mother Generosa [Mother Mary Generosa Wall, founding Sister of MSMC]. And then Sister Ursula Flynn, who started St. Joseph High School in Lakewood. Mother Rosemary [Lyons (1893-1971), President MSMC 1955-1958]. Mother Rosemary was very close to our family and I have a little story. When my sister was graduating from high school, in those days they had wills. And so they dressed me all up and brought me on the stage and said--and Peg, my sister, said, "And for my gift to the school I will my little sister Suzanne". Then when I entered the community, Mother Rosemary was Provincial, and she said, "Well, Peg really did will you to us, didn't she?" [all laugh].

[00:08:16.04] SHANNON GREEN: So what do you think attracted you to the Sisters? You knew them, you had relationship with them, but can you say more about what they were like as a community that you noticed when you were young?

[00:08:28.01] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: They always had fun even though it was a very difficult community life, because it was a boarding school, and they had lots of boarders from grade--well, some were pre-school--some were left there, and--kind of like orphans. And so they were always happy amidst really hard work--had fun, were able to joke with us. They didn't usually joke as much with us when they were teaching as they did. And we used to--as I said, my mother said, "You need to spend more time at home". But when we were working with them it was like we were one of them. We had a beautiful relationship with the Sisters, and I always felt peaceful and happy when I was around them.

[00:09:30.05] SHANNON GREEN: So did that--is that why you decided to go to Mount Saint Mary's for college, was that you knew the Sisters?

[00:09:37.27] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. And many of the girls from Prescott went to Mount Saint Mary's College. It was the college for the Catholic Prescott girls to go to. [smiles].

[00:09:49.14] SHANNON GREEN: What did you study while you were at the Mount?

[00:09:52.24] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, that's kind of interesting. I started out in Zoology with Sister Gertrude Joseph [Cook (-1962)]. She was wonderful--my mother had known her. And she was a wonderful person, but I didn't like it. And to show how confused I was, I changed to Home Economics the second semester, because I said I liked the labs better with Home Ec than with Zoology. [laughs].

[00:10:20.28] SHANNON GREEN: And so you entered religious life while you were still a student at the Mount? Is that correct?

[00:10:28.20] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Well, in--I was there for one year, and I entered the community the next September--along with about three or four other young women who were in my class.

[00:10:43.16] SHANNON GREEN: Would you tell us a little bit more about your relationship with Sister Mary Gerald?

[00:10:47.26] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh. [laughs]. She was a wonderful person. I didn't have her for class. We were assigned sponsors then, or counselors. And so she was my counselor. And at first I was a little nervous because I could tell that she was kind of nudging me towards religious life, and right at that point I wasn't really ready. And then, when I grew to know her better I had a great appreciation for her. I never was in any of her classes, but I also had the joy of knowing her as an older woman. I was there at Carondelet Center right before she died. And we were always good friends.

[00:11:43.03] SHANNON GREEN: People have very fond memories of her--

[00:11:45.08] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes.

[00:11:46.15] SHANNON GREEN: --and credit her with their vocations a lot.

[00:11:48.17] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. And another friend of mine was Sister Laurentia [Sister Mary Laurentia Digges, (1910-1991)]. She was from Arizona, and she knew my family in Prescott. I think she might have--either she went to school at St. Joseph's Academy or her relatives did, I know. But she was a very good friend of mine--Sister Laurentia Digges. Um-hm.

[00:12:16.01] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Do you remember other Sisters who were on the faculty at that time at the Mount?

[00:12:20.08] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Sister Alice Marie [Cheap (1906-1984)], Sister Berenice [Sister Mary Berenice Coyne]--she was just oh--she was such a tremendous person. She wasn't really on the faculty--she was kind of in charge of housekeeping and supervising us. But she was such a motherly woman--she was just someone who was very well liked. Let's see--Sister Margaret Clare [Borchard (1911-2001)]. I think Sister Margaret Clare was more when we were young Sisters studying. I can't remember the others.

[00:12:59.07] SHANNON GREEN: What do you remember from your reception, or from the time that you became a postulant and--?

[00:13:08.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh. I have wonderful memories of my reception and Sister Laurentia and Sister Mary Gerald were the ones who dressed me. It was a big occasion for them and for us. And changing from the white dress to the habit and cutting my hair. [laughs].

[00:13:35.01] SHANNON GREEN: You had to cut your hair?

[00:13:37.00] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh yes. Quite short. [laughs].

[00:13:41.21] SHANNON GREEN: Did you like the habit?

[00:13:45.23] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I liked it when I was wearing it. It was difficult though, because when--my first mission was to Tucson, Arizona. And it was very, very cumbersome there in the heat, when we'd be out in the schoolyard with the children and that sun beating down on us. And it's funny--

my mother--she said, "Can't you take some of those clothes off?" "No Mother, not right now." [laughs]. But we also--we petitioned to wear the white habit instead of the black when I was there, but the petition was refused. Only nurses wore white habits. Then when we went to--when it came time to change the habit, I really did not want to change. The main reason is that I didn't want to have to worry about what I was going to wear again. And my mother was my big consoler there. She said, "Oh, Suzanne, what difference does it make what you wear?" [smiles].

[00:14:53.26] SHANNON GREEN: Did you--you must have received a religious name?

[00:14:58.03] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. I received--we had--then we could have three choices. And I asked for Sister Ann Margaret, because there were five generations of Margarets in my family and I wasn't one of them, and I thought that's the way I can get in on it. But they wouldn't--they said it was too close to other Sisters. So I took the name "Phillip Ann", after my brother Phillip.

[00:15:23.28] SHANNON GREEN: And when did you decide to return to your baptismal name?

[00:15:28.15] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: When I changed the habit. I didn't think that a masculine name went with feminine clothing. [all laugh].

[00:15:37.18] SHANNON GREEN: How did you adjust to community life--the prayer life, the silence--how was that for you as a young novice and a young Sister?

[00:15:48.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: When I entered there were fifty-one--large groups. And so I think it was easier for us. And I've always liked an organized life. And I loved the organization. I did not like getting up at five o'clock in the morning, and that's where my mother said, "I give you two weeks--she could never get up at five o'clock in the morning", because I was a late sleeper. But I showed her. [smiles]. And I--we enjoyed--we had a lot of fun because there were so many of us. And even though the rules were extremely strict compared to now it was good. It was a very, very nice life. I loved it.

[00:16:39.29] SHANNON GREEN: Do you have any specific memories of these fun moments when you were--at those times?

[00:16:45.16] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: We always loved Collation, which was in the afternoon--and they always gave us big bowls of peanut butter and bread. And so everybody gained tremendous weight. And we always had sports. We played basketball and volleyball and so on. It was really good to get outside and get exercise. And other happy memories is, we loved our charges [chores]. We would fight over who got to--but of course, we didn't have any choice--the kitchen charge of doing all the huge pots and pans and things. Because there were over a hundred people there at St. Mary's, because they came in from all the different schools and lived there.

[00:17:32.24] SHANNON GREEN: So you would do the dishes for well over a hundred people?

[00:17:37.12] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Great big huge pots and pans. [all laugh].

[00:17:40.15] SHANNON GREEN: What was it like for--you grew up in Arizona, and that's a different--that's a part of the history that's so important--but I think a lot of people don't--aren't always aware of. So did you have a different kind of experience being from Arizona, coming to LA with the women who entered from LA? Was there any kind of--?

[00:18:07.25] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: No. I don't--I would say that the adjustment there was more at the Mount, because when I came to the Mount--you know, when I was in Arizona I was used to going home from school and putting my Levis on, and when I came to the Mount I tried that and I got very strange looks. "What is she doing wearing Levis?" It just wasn't the thing in California. So the adjustment was there more with the Mount than it was with the community. Because everybody knew that our Sisters were in Prescott--had been there for many, many, many years, and so there was not--. And many of the Sisters had been in Prescott, you know--the professed Sisters.

[00:18:59.06] SHANNON GREEN: Would you say a little bit more about the--so there was the Academy in Prescott. Were there other ministries in Prescott? Would you say more about that?

[00:19:07.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. I had to do a little research last night because I wanted to tell you about that. Our first Sisters came to Prescott in 1878 to open a six-bed hospital. And there are still six Sisters buried in Prescott--all by themselves up there--but we keep track of them. Every time I go home I go out to the cemetery and see if their graves are okay. But that hospital didn't really last that long. It was more for the miners coming in, you know, from the mines, because they were big around Prescott at that time. But then it closed. And I didn't get that far in my research to see when the Academy began. But 1878 for the hospital.

[00:20:01.25] SHANNON GREEN: And when did the Academy close?

[00:20:04.22] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Ooh. It was sometime in the 1960s I believe--I'm not positive. Sorry.

[00:20:17.22] SHANNON GREEN: No, no, that's fine. That's absolutely fine. Okay. Let's talk a little bit about your early ministry. So we hear from Sisters you either became a teacher or a nurse--a lot from those times. Did you know you wanted to be a teacher instead of a nurse, or--how did that happen?

[00:20:41.16] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes, even though I was from a very medical family, I did want to be a teacher. But you know, that wasn't the reason why I entered.

[00:20:53.04] SHANNON GREEN: Why did you enter?

[00:20:55.01] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I entered because I knew down deep that that was the way God wanted me to lead my life--in service to others and as a Sister of St. Joseph.

[00:21:07.08] SHANNON GREEN: That was very clear, it sounds like.

[00:21:10.14] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: It got a little smoggy at times, you know. But, yes--sixty-three, sixty-four years later I can say it was a wonderful choice for me.

[00:21:26.29] SHANNON GREEN: Did your father ultimately come to support your decision?

[00:21:29.19] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Very much so. He used to brag. He had a little poem that said, "I am the Daddy of a Nun". [laughs].

[00:21:37.20] SHANNON GREEN: That's very sweet. So becoming a teacher came out of being a religious?

[00:21:45.21] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Right.

[00:21:47.13] SHANNON GREEN: So tell us about your early experiences in the classroom.

[00:21:51.10] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh. When I first went to Tucson I had sixty children in the classroom--sixty little six year olds. And it was crowded. We had six rows with ten little desks in each row. And it was not really difficult though for me, because in those days the discipline was so strict that there were no problems. They learned. They learned, you know, they did fine. But I always felt bad that you couldn't spend more time with individual children instead of the large group. And it was especially difficult because I had first grade. And in those days they hadn't had kindergarten--some would come in and they didn't know how to use scissors or how to hold their pencil or anything. But by the time--after Christmas--I always looked forward to the days after Christmas because they would really blossom and start learning to read and everything.

[00:23:10.26] SHANNON GREEN: Were you at a boarding school? Was St. Joseph's School a boarding school?

[00:23:13.28] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: No. No it was--we lived at St. Joseph's Academy and commuted to St. Joseph's School the first year. Then they built a beautiful new convent at St. Joseph's.

[00:23:26.21] SHANNON GREEN: Who did you live with? Who was in your community at that time?

[00:23:29.10] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Sister St. Charles Benton [(-2003)]; Sister Joyce Marie Gaspardo; Sister Mary George [Long?? (1918-2001)], who has died; Sister Louise [??]--I forget her last name--who died. Let's see, who else? I can't remember other--. I lived there for seven years, so I lived with a lot of different Sisters.

[00:23:57.00] SHANNON GREEN: What was community life like on a day to day basis?

[00:24:01.12] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, we liked Sister St. Charles because she was what we called a "lenient". [laughs]. Now, she's probably saying, "Suzanne, stop saying those things about me!" But she was. And for example, she and a Superior at St. Joseph's Academy were friends. And so we used to go on vacations to Northern Arizona in August, which was unheard of in California. And the Superiors used to say, "Now don't tell Mother Provincial about this--in your letters, don't ever say anything about this." So it wasn't--well, it was wonderful. And it was so much fun to have camaraderie with other Sisters from other communities.

[00:24:58.24] SHANNON GREEN: How many Sisters do you think were in Arizona at that time? Just approximately?

[00:25:05.08] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh. I'd say at least sixty maybe. Because we had the two hospitals, and two elementary schools, high school--Salpointe High School--St. Joseph's Academy--so, there might have been that many.

[00:25:28.26] SHANNON GREEN: Was the history that we now talk about--The Trek of the Seven Sisters [1870] and those first years in the Southwest--were you aware of that? Was that very much a part of the Tucson--of the Arizona experience as a young Sister?

[00:25:46.15] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh. Well, it had been a big part of our novitiate. We used to have reenactments of the Seven Sisters--The Trek of the Seven Sisters. And every time when--see, my family is in Tucson. And every time I drive by Picacho Peak I think of our Sisters--because that's where the people from Tucson came out to meet them. Oh yes. That was very much a part of our--.

[00:26:16.06] SHANNON GREEN: Just for the sake of people who don't know--so pretend I don't know anything about the Trek. Would you just briefly share what that--what the Trek is?

[00:26:27.09] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: The Trek was the first time that our Sisters came from St. Louis to the West. And they had to go a very roundabout way, and--let's see--I'm going to need some more research on this. But they went to San Francisco, and then took a boat from San Francisco to San Diego, and then from San Diego they took the covered wagons to Tucson.

[00:27:05.03] SHANNON GREEN: Do you remember some of their--the highlights of some of their experiences on that San Diego to Tucson stretch?

[00:27:13.19] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. I certainly do.

[00:27:15.12] SHANNON GREEN: Could you share just a couple of those with us?

[00:27:18.01] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, we used to read Sister Monica's [Sister Monica Corrigan (1843-??)] diary, and the incidents when they stopped at one place and all the ranchers came in to meet them and started proposing to them [smiles]--and I think that's the main thing. We used to laugh at that.

[00:27:43.12] SHANNON GREEN: There were some treacherous moments for them as well.

[00:27:47.20] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, when you see that country--when I go zooming by at eighty miles an hour and I look over and see the treacherous trail that they took--it was--I mean, I admire those Sisters so much. Because it was coming to the end of the world for them.

[00:28:11.29] SHANNON GREEN: I have asked Sister Mary Murphy this--what do you think they were thinking as they--I feel, when they got to San Diego, they must have had to make a decision to keep going, you know, and get that covered wagon. Do you have any--just, do you ever think about what that was like for them and how they had the courage to do what they did?

[00:28:34.10] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, I think they--after they made that first commitment--it's almost like entering religious life--there's no turning back now, you know. They made that first decision to make this journey and trip and there was no turning back--and also, obedience came in. They were--probably said, you know, "This is what I'm supposed to do."

[00:29:04.07] SHANNON GREEN: Could you say a little bit about Arizona at that time? Like, what were they--in terms of the people and the needs--do you know a little sense of--you know, in terms of the Indian communities and--?

[00:29:17.11] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, the people of Tucson who were the ones who were so anxious to have them and the Bishop had requested them--they were most interested in a good education in the--

[00:29:37.04] [Director's comments].

[00:31:17.20] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I didn't realize--this isn't on camera--I didn't realize until last night Sister Hyacinth [Blanc] was it? or Ambrosia [Sister Ambrosia Anichaud]--one of the two was from Canada--she had been married and had three children. And they all died--her husband and her children all died of diphtheria. And then she, I guess, somehow ended up in St. Louis and entered the community. [Actually, it was Sister Monica Corrigan (birth name Ann Taggart), native of Hemingford Canada, whose husband John Corrigan of Kansas City, Missouri died of diphtheria when Sister Monica was 23 years old, and entered the CSJs soon after. Ref. Encyclopedia of Women in the American West.] I never knew that until--I love to do the research. I love history.

[00:31:52.04] SHANNON GREEN: That's great.

[00:31:54.02] [Director's comments].

[00:32:05.08] SHANNON GREEN: I was asking you--we were--you had said--started to talk about the Sisters and their obedience and how you draw--how you admire them. Is that--I think that's where we--

[00:32:17.21] KELBY THWAITS: Yeah.

[00:32:18.28] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Admire the Sisters--

[00:32:20.26] SHANNON GREEN: --the Seven Sisters, who--

[00:32:22.00] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. I really admire the Sisters who came at the beginning on the Trek. And I also admire all the Sisters who came from St. Louis to work in the Indian schools later--San Xavier [del Bac Mission] in Tucson, and Banning, and other--and I lived--the one Sister Maria Louisa [??] I lived with--she had been in one of those Indian missions and told stories about working with the Indian children.

[00:32:59.18] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah. It seems like that was a big draw for Sisters was the call to work with the Indians.

[00:33:05.15] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. I think that it was a draw to the Sisters because in those days there was--they knew that there were many injustices against the Indian people--the Native Americans.

[00:33:23.00] SHANNON GREEN: I also wonder sometimes what it must have been like--like you said it was "the ends of the earth", you know--how different it must have been for them. Do you have any thoughts about that?

[00:33:33.25] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, even going back to my own family when they first moved to Kingman, Arizona--they had to haul all their water. They had no running water. They had to bring it from the well. And my mother and grandmother--mainly my grandmother, until the day she died--couldn't stand to hear water running or wasting water because of the background of--. And I'm sure the Sisters had to do that. They had to work very hard in those Indian missions, because they were there mothers--they took care of the children for twenty-four hours a day, twelve months out of the year. And they were their teachers. And somewhere in there they had to get in their sleep and their prayer. [all laugh].

[00:34:31.15] SHANNON GREEN: Do you have any other memories--so when you were in St. Joseph's school--you said you were there for seven years--and then the Second Vatican Council starts to unfold in the early sixties.

[00:34:45.19] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Right.

[00:34:46.13] SHANNON GREEN: And then you come back to Southern California.

[00:34:50.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I was in San Diego.

[00:34:51.15] SHANNON GREEN: Do you remember--just being part of the community at that time--what it was like to start to hear about Vatican II and how people were responding--how you felt about it?

[00:35:02.14] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. I remember that as a younger Sister I really didn't have any fear, but I detected a lot of fear in our older Sisters, you know. They were afraid that things were going to change just too drastically. But it went quite smoothly for us. And as I said, I think one of the main things that happened with us is the change in the dress, habit--but also in our horarium--it changed quite a bit. But it was a lot easier, you know, the change--it wasn't as strict as before. And I felt that we were still just as good and holy with the changes.

[00:36:04.26] SHANNON GREEN: Could you describe how the changes affected prayer and community life?

[00:36:09.15] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, with prayer, we did not have a--I'm going to have to think about this--

[00:36:23.01] SHANNON GREEN: Okay, that's all right.

[00:36:24.07] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yeah. I saw that last night and I thought--

[00:36:31.19] SHANNON GREEN: Some people have talked about, you know, there was more silence before--and then sometimes the kind of time of prayer would change--the ministries were changing--

[00:36:39.07] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Right. Yeah. And the community life.

[00:36:45.11] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah. So any of those kind of shifts that you remember.

[00:36:48.13] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Okay.

[00:36:54.26] [Director's comments].

[00:37:01.28] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I would say that the changes after Vatican II were gradual enough that they weren't--it wasn't tumultuous, you know. It was a gradual change, mainly in silence and times of prayer.

[00:37:22.21] SHANNON GREEN: How did you feel about the changes in liturgy in the larger Church?

[00:37:26.18] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I loved the changes in liturgy in the larger Church--loved it. It was so much more meaningful--and still is.

[00:37:39.02] SHANNON GREEN: Can you say more about what--was it the language, the music--what was that for you?

[00:37:46.10] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I would say that the changes--it was just everything. The language from Latin to English, reading--the readings in English--and the whole Mass in English. The priest faced us instead of with his back to us. Singing was much nicer--[smiles]--I thought. And just generally everything with the liturgy was much better--in my opinion. [all laugh].

[00:38:26.15] SHANNON GREEN: I agree. [all laugh]. Other shifts in Vatican II include, you know, religious communities reclaiming their roots.

[00:38:37.25] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Right.

[00:38:39.05] SHANNON GREEN: So do you have memories of how you and your community engaged or reengaged the history, the charism--started to articulate the charism?

[00:38:48.04] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, we had Sisters who very much specialized in this and went to Rome and did a lot of research, and so it was very much a part of our discussions when we were together as a group and community. I've always been interested in History, so I was very, very much interested in these stories. And then later on I went to Le Puy [France] and I've been to Lyon--and it was just a powerful, powerful experience for me. But another experience I had of the power of these young people in our community is, when I went to St. Louis for the 350th anniversary of the community, and to stand there by the cathedral and know that our Sisters came to the city right at that spot. It was very--and I'm always touched by the letter of Mother St. John [Jeanne Fontbonne (1759-1843), second foundress of CSJs], that she wrote to them, and knowing that she would never see them again. And imagine--we're talking about the Sisters on the Trek--imagine the Sisters leaving from France and knowing they were never going to see their families again.

[00:40:20.12] SHANNON GREEN: So it sounds like you draw real inspiration from them--

[00:40:24.19] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I do.

[00:40:25.22] SHANNON GREEN: Would you say a little bit more, like, as if I don't know anything about Mother St. John and that movement of Sisters to the United States? Can you just tell us a little bit of that story?

[00:40:35.17] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I'll try to think of it.

[00:40:37.19] SHANNON GREEN: Whatever comes to mind in terms of your own inspiration that you draw on.

[00:40:41.17] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: All right. I'm--think I'd better not even launch into that. But I'm sure you can find other people who will do a better job than I.

[00:40:56.16] SHANNON GREEN: Sure. We just like to draw bits and pieces from people's--

[00:41:01.22] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Right--

[00:41:02.00] SHANNON GREEN: --from different--so if there was even just a piece of the story like you've already shared that is inspiring to you--

[00:41:07.04] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes--

[00:41:07.24] SHANNON GREEN: --or something that you saw in Lyon, or--

[00:41:09.11] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Yes. Well, as I said, the most inspiration I've gotten is that letter. I think I cry every time I read that letter, because it was so difficult for her to send them off to the unknown. And especially I think two--or three of them--were her nieces. But I think Mother St. John--she must have been a wonderful person, because she really--in the things that I've read--she really stood her ground as a woman leader in those days.

[00:41:58.20] SHANNON GREEN: Sounds like something we can all learn from.

[00:42:00.29] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. [All laugh].

[00:42:02.09] SHANNON GREEN: That's great. Thank you. So as all of this is unfolding--Vatican II--and you were continuing to be a teacher, did you like being a teacher?

[00:42:15.04] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: No. [smiles]. I didn't. I never liked teaching. I stayed with it, and when I was very young I thought--but I didn't say it--I'll do this for about twenty-five years then I'm going to do something else. But in those days we had no choice. You were either a teacher or a nurse. And I lasted five years longer. However, ten of those thirty years that I was in the elementary education I was Principal, and I liked being Principal better than being a teacher. And the main reason why is because I loved individual contact with the parents, individual contact with the children, and individual contact with the teachers.

[00:43:09.19] SHANNON GREEN: You were at St. Cyril's as a Principal--

[00:43:12.28] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: That's right.

[00:43:13.18] SHANNON GREEN: Yeah. What was it like for you--you went back and forth a little bit between Arizona and Southern California. What was that like for you? Do you always feel like an Arizonan at heart, or--?

[00:43:25.11] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I think I'm to the point where I've spent more of my life in California, and I spent eight years in Washington and one year in Hawaii. But I've spent more of my life out of Arizona than in Arizona. And I'll always be an Arizona lover, but I also am a big advocate for California, especially San Diego. [all laugh].

[00:43:51.22] SHANNON GREEN: Good. We can talk to--talk about that. So how did your ministry begin to shift away from elementary education?

[00:44:00.19] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I just--I lived with Sisters who were in parish work, and I just felt very drawn to parish ministry. And the main reason why is because you could really concentrate on faith development or faith life in that ministry. And--so then, I had not had any formal religious education for seventeen years, so I went back to USF [University of San Francisco] one summer to see if I could still do it. And I had a wonderful course and so then the community said, "Get your masters" in--it was a masters of Applied Spirituality, but with wonderful Theology that I was able to use in my work in parishes. And I love parish work very, very much.

[00:45:01.09] SHANNON GREEN: Oh good. Let's talk a little bit more about that. But when you were studying, do you remember was there a particular theologian or model of spirituality that really spoke to you or inspired you or shaped your ministry?

[00:45:16.17] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I had one professor, and I'm sorry I don't remember his name--but it was called "The Mystery of God". And that really--along with my new study of Cosmology--which really came from our Sisters--changed my whole life and my spiritual life and my concept and image of God. And I always tried to help people in--I had RCIA [Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults]--in parish ministry I always tried to help them, you know, with their image of God. Because that rules your whole--your

relationship with God is affected by what your image of God is.

[00:46:06.10] SHANNON GREEN: So could you say more about that--what that process might be like? For example, someone might have a traditional image? So could you talk about what that--and how broadening that might help someone transform spiritually? So name some of those for us.

[00:46:25.08] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: All right. Well, the image of God is--if a person has a "traditional" image of God it tends to be a God of fear--someone who is watching everything you do and judging everything. And with a different image of God, that has nothing to do with your relationship with God. Your relationship with God--it's difficult to name God and really--oh, I'm going to have to stop here.

[00:47:06.02] SHANNON GREEN: That's okay.

[00:47:06.28] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: It's hard to put in words. Your image of God affects your whole relationship with God, as it does with people--exactly the same way. You know, if you have this idea of a person and they are not--that is not their true image, then your relationship is going to be different with that person. And it's that way with God. It affects your prayer life--I mean, everything. So if we can just impart--and I can just keep believing and knowing that, that God is a loving God, and "far beyond our names or words" as one song goes--but a God of love.

[00:48:02.10] SHANNON GREEN: What are--what are some of the kind of images that you think have helped people that you've worked with along the way? You know--and--

[00:48:13.29] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I don't know--I can't--

[00:48:18.19] SHANNON GREEN: Okay. I'm sort of talking around--you know, "God the Father" is kind of the traditional scriptural image, but there are other different--

[00:48:27.07] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh, many--

[00:48:28.10] SHANNON GREEN: --not gendered--just if you would name any of those that you think--

[00:48:33.03] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh I don't think I can do that.

[00:48:34.29] SHANNON GREEN: Okay, that's all right. New Cosmology. You said something about--could you just talk a little bit about what that is and how that's impacted you?

[00:48:47.03] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: New Cosmology is the study--and it's a combination of science and sociology--of the universe and realizing how much bigger God is than the Earth and planets. And with that--I remember as a little girl in Prescott--I used to look up at the stars, because they are very clear there, and think, "Those stars, I've learned in school, are lightyears, lightyears away and that light that is coming to us, you know, was from many years ago". And how big God is if the stars are that way. And that's what Cosmology--the study of Cosmology--has really done for me, is realizing that it's beyond this Earth and our solar system even--galaxies. And God is in charge of all that, and that's why God is so difficult to name.

[00:50:09.26] SHANNON GREEN: Thank you. That's great. Would you say a little bit more about your love of parish life and--just your--you know, some of the positions--some of the things--you've mentioned a few of the ministries you've had--but why you think that's been a draw for you--an important part of our Church life?

[00:50:29.04] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I think that with parish life--I had worked for the Church for so many years, and as a woman I feel that parish life is very important for women ministers. And--because you can become so close to the people, and they're hungering for so much that we can give them. Not that men can't give it to them, but women give it to them in a different way. And I found much fulfillment, of course, in the RCIA, and helping people in their journey to God. And I used to tell them, you know, "This isn't a course you take and you graduate--you are coming into this program to deepen your relationship with God and what you're saying is, you want a deepened relationship with God in community, which is the

Church".

[00:51:39.19] SHANNON GREEN: Would you, just for the camera, say what "RCIA" stands for?

[00:51:44.12] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: "RCIA" is the "Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults".

[00:51:51.13] SHANNON GREEN: Thank you. Yeah, I'm a big believer in parish life myself, and have often organized my own life around the parish. Can you just say more about what the parish can do for the community, or what is, you know, the role of the parish--that--your vision of what a parish can be?

[00:52:14.19] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well, the spirituality--as far as the life of the parish--the important thing is spirituality and deepening your spirituality in community. And there's so much that can be done in a parish in social justice, working with others to help the poor and the needy. And it's just a wonderful springboard and possibility, if we would use it correctly and as it should be used for the furtherment of the--I don't want to say "kingdom"--but, of God's world.

[00:52:58.04] SHANNON GREEN: Do you have an example of a social justice issue that you've witnessed within parish life that has been effective, or at least passionate for you?

[00:53:08.18] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I would say that I receive more--right now I am working with refugees in Catholic charities. And I am finding more fulfillment and--from this than--I've never had this experience in my life. I've never been able to--to be with these people--it's a whole other world for me--people from Africa and all other Asian nations. And I would say that was--that's where I really see social justice and all there is to be done.

[00:54:05.00] SHANNON GREEN: It sounds a lot like the charism--responding to the needs and--could you talk a little bit about the charism and how it--as we articulate it now--and how that has interacted--interfaced with your--or intersected with your ministries?

[00:54:22.17] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Well the--I would say--the charism of reconciliation is so important in--no matter where you are or what you are doing. And I've found that my whole life. Even though when I entered, we had different names for the charism--"Humility and Charity"--but then after the Sisters did the study of the primitive documents, then that was when they changed the words to "Unity and Reconciliation"--and working with the "dear neighbor". And that is something I definitely see in my retirement work now, is working--who is your "neighbor"? You know what Jesus said. [laughs]. Well, I'm seeing now who my neighbor is. And most of them are not Catholic. And they don't even know what nuns are. And I don't tell them most of the time that I'm a nun. But it's just as--when I talk to the Muslims, I say, "We're all praying to the same God". And that is what is very realistic when I see them. And we are praying to the same God.

[00:55:52.19] SHANNON GREEN: That's great. That's really good. Thank you. So you are in retirement now?

[00:56:00.25] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I am in retirement--I have since 2012--so that means five years. And I've been doing this work with refugees for the five years. I've joined Ignatian Volunteer Corps [IVC], and they find services for you. And the director said, "Well, maybe you would like to work with refugees." And I said, "I don't speak Spanish". And she said, "Neither do they." [all laugh].

[00:56:37.23] SHANNON GREEN: Would you say a little bit about what Ignatian Volunteer Corps is?

[00:56:41.01] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Ignatian Volunteer Corps is equivalent to Jesuit Volunteer Corps for younger people. It's established for retired people. And the organization has service groups that are under the auspices of Ignatian Volunteer. And so we work through them, and they assign us, after interviews, to our service groups.

[00:57:16.12] SHANNON GREEN: Is there a community reflection component as well?

[00:57:20.00] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Oh yes. We have--there is a community reflection component

to Ignatian Volunteers. We have it--monthly meetings, beginning with Mass, then we always have some kind of spiritual input. And then the part I love most is we all share where we have met God in our service in the past month.

[00:57:53.24] SHANNON GREEN: Sounds like that's easy for you to answer. Is it? Is it easy to answer?

[00:57:57.10] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I love it. I love it. Yes.

[00:58:00.15] SHANNON GREEN: Can you give us any sort of wisdom about those kinds of insights, and by that I mean, in this time in the world, how do we find God? What would you say to somebody who said, "I'm looking for how to see God alive in these difficult times"?

[00:58:23.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I'm going to have to think about that one. That's a powerful question. [laughs].

[00:58:27.20] SHANNON GREEN: You just--your face lights up when you talk about, you know, your ministry. So--what do you know--what is--

[00:58:36.26] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: You mean, from this particular refugee--

[00:58:39.10] SHANNON GREEN: Sure--if we can [unintelligible] this one--yeah--

[00:58:41.14] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I don't know. I don't--well, it's very Ignatian to find God in all things. And in this ministry, I have found God very much in a different way than the rest of my life. And it's because I'm exposed to people that I have never been around before--people from all different countries. And it's just such a universal thing. And I find God in them, and I know they find God in me. And it's just such a mutual thing that--and I'm so grateful for--I really felt like the Spirit led me to this work and I'm grateful. And many of the Sisters are envious. [All laugh].

[00:59:46.14] SHANNON GREEN: That's great. Thank you. Do you still do any work in the parish--parish life?

[00:59:52.21] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: No. I don't.

[00:59:54.01] SHANNON GREEN: You've fully retired from parish life.

[00:59:55.23] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Um-hm.

[00:59:57.12] SHANNON GREEN: Let's see. Towards the end of some of these questions here. You've talked a little bit about women's leadership, especially in the Church. We talk a lot about leadership at Mount Saint Mary's for our young women students. Do you have any words of wisdom or advice for them, or hopes for them as women leaders?

[01:00:22.01] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Um-hm. Very much so. I have great hopes for women's leadership. I look forward to the days in the Church when women will be deaconesses. They were in the early Church--they should be now. And then I do look forward to the day when women will be priests. And I'm sure that many women receive that call and then it cannot be carried out. Also, I see such a call to leadership in parishes for women, too, because there is lots of area there--lots of ground for--possibilities, I want to say--to be leaders in the parishes. They have more time--some of them--than the men and we have a lot of natural leaders among the women.

[01:01:37.14] SHANNON GREEN: What are some of those gifts or--that women can continue to develop for their leadership? Or what do you think is special about women's leadership in particular? Qualities--

[01:01:50.20] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I think we have some very intelligent women. And I think women have a sensitivity to other people that can be used fruitfully. They are very good organizers-- [smiles]--and I just--I think that many people respond to a nice, warm listening woman.

[01:02:24.24] SHANNON GREEN: Let's talk a little bit about just the future of religious life, or the future of the charism of the Sisters of St. Joseph. Do you have hopes around that, anxieties around the future in terms of the charism living on, declining vocations, things like that? How do you feel about that?

[01:02:45.14] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: I don't have anxieties, and maybe it's because I'm eighty-three years old, and so I don't feel that I really need to worry about it, or have anxieties. I have great hopes. I think that the charism will be carried on. I don't know whether it will be in great numbers. I know--I know from, you know, the study of the charism and our history that it will be carried on. And it will be the young leaders that we talked about before and all the wonderful people who have been in contact with our community and love our charism as much as we do.

[01:03:39.09] [Director's comments].

[01:03:50.10] SHANNON GREEN: I also just wanted to--we're going to be doing some filming tomorrow at Assembly, and so one of the editors asked that we just--could you say a little bit about why you're in town, and what Assembly is, and if you're looking forward to something about Assembly? That would be very helpful.

[01:04:09.02] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: All right. I'm in Los Angeles because I'm coming to our yearly Assembly, which is usually held in August--but it was transferred to October this year. And we're looking forward to it very much. We have lots of work to do, and I don't know whether we're going to get it done in two days or not, but we're here, and ready to work.

[01:04:34.17] SHANNON GREEN: Can you say--so who is it that attends Assembly?

[01:04:37.04] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: For this Assembly, it's just the Sisters. For former ones, it has been Sisters and Associates. But for this one--because of the work that we did for our General Chapter in April--and that's why it was transferred to October--and because of preparation for the next Chapter in 2018--they just wanted voting members, the Sisters.

[01:05:15.04] SHANNON GREEN: So this is a time when things are discussed that then make decisions?

[01:05:21.03] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: The big discussion now is government.

[01:05:25.17] SHANNON GREEN: Thank you. Is there anything that you prepared or reflected on that I haven't asked you about? Or a Sister or a memory you want to share? Or something about Arizona?

[01:05:43.00] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: [all laugh]. I think I've covered everything that I had thought about.

[01:05:48.20]: [Director's comments].

[01:07:45.08] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: [discussing heat in Arizona]. Oh it was--and then to have our petition--it would have been so much easier if they had been white, they'd be so much easier to take care of. And--the Provincial said, "No."

[01:07:58.03] SHANNON GREEN: I didn't know that that request had been made, but that makes a lot of sense.

[01:08:03.12] SISTER SUZANNE ENSMINGER: Yes. Not many people know that.

[01:08:06.01] [Director's comments].

[01:08:47.10] End of interview.

